
The Linguistic Landscape at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport, Bali: Readers' Attitudes

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at describing the linguistic landscape (LL) at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport (IGNRIA), and the readers' attitudes towards the LL. The data of LL was gathered by capturing textual forms of a language/languages by a handphone camera, while the data on readers' attitudes was collected through interviewing airport signs readers. The readers were determined based on a number of criterias, such as nationality, age and education. The result of the study showed that: 1. The LL at IGNRIA made use of 7 (seven) variations of language used, namely: a). Indonesian, b). English, c). Indonesian-English, d). English-Indonesian, e). Balinese-English, f). English-Chinese and g). Balinese script-English. 2. Regarding the attitudes towards LL, the readers agreed the importance existence of LL at IGNRIA, in which bilingual Indonesian-English was used, instead of Indonesian or English written monolingually. Related with the configurational composition, some readers stated that Indonesian must be on top of English; while the others thought that either Indonesian or English can be on top, as long as it was clear and informative. Furthermore, readers strongly supported the use of Balinese and Balinese script in LL which may function as identity symbol, as well as preserving Balinese language and maintaining Balinese culture. Readers even stated the use of Balinese can be a tourist attraction which was nice to see. The use of a foreign language other than English was welcome as long as it was intended to fulfil the information needs of the airport customers.

Keywords: *linguistic landscape, readers' attitude, I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport, Bali*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Linguistic landscape (LL) refers to any textual forms of a language (languages) which are present in the public space, such as: commercial signs, traffic signs, posters, and official notices (Gorter, 2006). Furthermore, he stated that the meaning of LL was sometimes extended to cover a description of the language history or different degrees in the knowledge of language. In line with Gorter's statement, Ben-Rafael and Shohamy, et al (2006) wrote that linguistic landscapes referred to linguistic objects found in public spaces. The object can certainly be related to various topics or aspects, such as social, political, cultural and economic. Among the number of various insights on LL, Pavlenko, (2010) highlighted that LL was all about written language or languages used in the public space. Since it was first presented by Landry and Bourhis in 1997, LL has become an interesting study for linguists. More and more LL researches have been conducted in all parts of the world and studied from various perspectives and settings. (Colluzzi,

2009; Pavlenko, 2010; Lado, 2011). In Asia, especially, a lot of LL studies have been done in Japan, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Cambodia (Backhaus, 2006; Leeman and Modan, 2009; Heinrich, 2010; Huebner, 2016). Despite of huge number of LL studies have been conducted, there are still very few researches on LL with the setting of airport. Among those, there were studies done by Woo and Riget (2022) and Li and Yang. (2022). Woo and Riget (2022) explored the LL in Kuala Lumpur International Airport and the users's attitude towards LL, while Li and Yang (2022) investigated the discursive construction of Shanghai as a global city in connection with the Semiotic LL at Pudong international airport.

In Indonesia, researches on LL at the airport are not many, as well. Those few studies were conducted by Widiyanto (2018), Handika (2019), and Rahmawaty. Widiyanto investigated the use of national language, Indonesia, in Soekarno-Hatta airport. The study found out that multilingual sign was dominant set by the airport authority. Next researcher, Handika (2019) explored the LL in Kualanamu International airport, North Sumatera. The research finding showed monolingual, bilingual and multilingual signs "colored" LL at the airport. Another expert, Rahmawaty (2022) intended to find out the contestation of Indonesian and foreign languages at Yogyakarta International airport. The result of the research was the contestation of the use of Indonesia and foreign language which are not in accordance with the law and regulation.

Those researches are all about the language used in LL in the airport. There is no further studies on airport readers'attitudes towards LL at the airport. Regarding to the issue, this research was conducted to find out the language used of LL in I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport (IGNRIA) and gauging the airport readers' attitudes/perceptions towards the LL. Knowing readers attitudes or perceptions will be good data base on which improvement of setting textual signs in the LL at IGNRIA can be done.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This is a qualitative study by providing description of LL at IGNRIA, as well as the readers's attitudes towards the language used in the LL at the airport. The readers are those who comes to IGNRIA and have read the signs (anykind of textual forms of a language/languages). The readers'attitudes are the settled ways of thinking or feelings of readers towards LL which are then reflected in their behaviour. They may state their agreement or disagreement towards the language used in the LL and giving their opinions on it. The research was done from August to October 2022 at both terminals of IGNRIA. The data of the study were in the form of languages used which were written on the informational signs (LL) and the airport readers'attitudes/perceptions towards the LL. The data of LL were collected by capturing images (signs) by a handphone camera. The data collected were then grouped based on the kinds of languages used on each of the sign. The data of readers' attitude towards LL was obtained by interviewing 10 airport readers. The readers as respondents were chosen on purpose (purposive sampling) based on a number of criterias, such as nationality, age, and education.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Data Description

IGNRIA is one of the international airports in Indonesia, and the one and only international airport in Bali. The airport has got two terminals: domestic and international. It is located in Badung regency, exactly at Tuban Village, district of Kuta, which is about ten kilometres south of Denpasar, the capital of Bali province.

As a public place which gives services especially to airport users/customers, the airport management (authority) must have provided any kinds of information which are presented (mostly) in textual forms or written language. The forms can be catagorized as greetings, welcoming remarks, thanking words, name of buildings, traffic signs, information, promotion, appeal, warning and prohibitions. Those text are presented on signages, baliho or moving screen. Regarding to the language used in the textual forms, IGNRIA makes use of the national

language Indonesian, English, China, Balinese Script, and Balinese. The description of the languages used are as follows:

Indonesian

As a national and official language in the Republic of Indonesia, Indonesian is primary used in IGNRIA. The language is either used monolingually or in bilingual with English. Since it is an international place, Indonesian is not used as many as bilingual Indonesian-English.

Monolingual use of Indonesian (as shown in figure 1) in the linguistic landscape at IGNRIA area is minimal, Indonesian is only found used on information boards about direction signs, such as “ke Denpasar (to Denpasar)”, and appeals, such as “Hati-hati, kendaraan menyebrang (Be careful, vehicle crossing)”. This small percentage of Indonesian language usage can be logically accepted. IGNRIA Bali has users/customers not only domestic ones, but also international tourists. It is assumed that international users do not understand Indonesian. The use of monolingual Indonesian at IGNRIA should be equipped with English as a tool to provide information (communication tool) for users from abroad.



Figure 1. Appeal written in Indonesian

English

In addition to Indonesian being used monolingually, at IGNRIA there is also monolingual use of English. As with Indonesian, the use of monolingual English is not many, when compared to the use of bilingual languages. Referring to the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 24 of 2009 concerning the use of language in public spaces, the use of monolingual English is a matter that violates the law. Even in areas that requires English, the use of Indonesian must still be given priority, namely written first or put at the top of English or other foreign languages. Figure 2 below are examples of the use of English at IGNRIA.

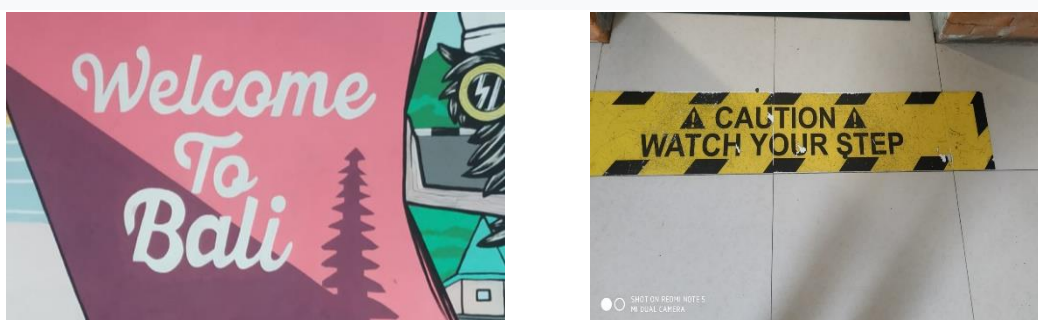


Figure 2. Welcoming remarks and warning written in English

Indonesian and English

The use of bilingual languages namely Indonesian and English, where the English is a translation of the Indonesian language, is also found in LL at IGNRIA. The phenomenon of using this kind of bilingual is found on information boards about assembly points, information boards regarding directions, baggage claims, evacuation routes, health protocols, queuing, etc. The use of bilingual signs in which Indonesian is written above or before English constitutes compliance to the laws of the Republic of Indonesia, that is the laws of language of public space. In figure 3 below are examples of using the bilingual of Indonesian-English.



Figure 3. Information and Direction written in Indonesian-English

English and Indonesian

The use of bilingual English-Indonesian in which the language is a translation between the two is also found in LL at IGNRIA area, as shown in figure 4 below. However this bilingual sign is not as many as bilingual of Indonesian-English.



Figure 4. Non-smoking sign written in English and Indonesian

Balinese and English

At IGNRIA, there is also the use of bilingual Balinese and English, in which English is used to explain the words used in Balinese. This phenomenon is found in greetings: "Rahajeng Memargi" (meaning goodbye) and thanks "Matur Suksme" (meaning thank you). These Balinese words are given an explanation in English, as shown in figure 5 below



Figure 5. Greetings written in Balinese with English explanation

English and Chinese

The use of English and Chinese is also available at IGNRIA. The use of this bilingual is only found on one sign, namely the name of the hotel, as shown in the following figure.



Figure 6. Name of hotel written in English and Chinese

Balinese script and English

In LL at IGNRIA, there is also the use of Balinese script and English. The use of this kind of bilingual is not many. One of the few signs found in welcoming remarks, like in the following figure.



Figure 7. Welcoming remarks written in Balinese script and English

3.2 Readers' Attitudes towards LL at IGNRIA

To obtain data on readers' attitudes towards LL at IGNRIA, an interview instrument was used. This activity is based on a number of questions as follows:

- 1) Have you noticed/read the written signs on billboards or signages at IGNRIA?
- 2) What do you think of the importance of these signs?
- 3) What is your opinion of the use of the language in LL? Indonesian, English, or bilingual Indonesian-English, etc? In terms of language position (configuration), do you agree that Indonesian is written first before English? Or vice versa, English first?
- 4) There is also a Balinese language such as "matur suksme" and "rahajeng memargi" and Balinese script in LL? What do you think?
- 5) What is your opinion of the use of foreign language in LL?

Of the 10 respondents, all stated that they certainly had to pay attention and read the written signs, especially in the form of information, such as directions for gates, information on baggage claim, and information on places to eat and drink or restrooms. However, respondents stated that not all writings were considered. Information they don't need, they tend not to pay attention to. For example, they have no interest in buying souvenirs, so they don't pay attention to the writings about souvenir shops.

Regarding the function of LL, all respondents agreed that LL must exist for it is really important especially in providing information. This perception or attitude is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Yan and Lee, (2014) which stated that one of the respondents' perceptions regarding LL in Macau is that LL is very important as a vehicle for providing information, especially regarding destinations in Macau. In fact, the results of the study also stated that LL could provide information about the history and culture.

Below is the users' attitude of the use of languages in LL at IGNRIA.

1) Use of Indonesian and English

All respondents strongly agreed bilingual Indonesian-English should be used in LL at IGNRIA, instead of Indonesian or English used monolingually. As previously described, IGNRIA users/customers are not only domestic, but also users from various countries, most of whom relatively do not understand Indonesian. Therefore, national language Indonesian must be accompanied with English, which is a translation of Indonesian. The result of this study supports the findings of the previous research done by Woo and Riget (2022), which stated that the users of Kuala Lumpur International airport agreed that a combination of Malay (national language of Malaysia) and English should be used in the airport.

Regarding configuration, whether Indonesian is written on top of English (or before English), there are two different attitudes. Respondents who come from Indonesia agreed that Indonesian must be placed above English, or before English. The reason is because IGNRIA is located in Indonesia. The following is the opinion of one respondent regarding the position of Indonesian over English in LL:

"In my opinion, Indonesian should be written on top or before English or other languages. because IGNRIA is located in Indonesia. So, we must give priority to Indonesian".

On the other hand, respondents from other countries stated that according to configuration, either Indonesian or English may be written above or before other languages. The most important thing in this LL is the clarity of the information conveyed through the use of that language. In line with this opinion, there was a respondent who thought that there was no problem with the configuration in LL with two languages. It's just that English must be written larger than Indonesian. The reason given was to make it more "eye-catching", especially for foreign customers who mostly understand English. In detail, the opinion was expressed as follows:

“ English or Indonesian may be written above or before the other. I think the most important is the customer easily read and get the information clearly. In LL with two languages (Indonesian and English), the size of the letters of English can be bigger than Bahasa Indonesia, so it is eye-catching.”

2) Use of Balinese script

All respondents agreed to use the Balinese script at Ngurah Rai Airport. For respondents who came from Indonesia, the use of Balinese script was considered very good as an identity or characteristic of a region (Bali). In addition, the use of the Balinese language is also a way to maintain Balinese culture. For respondents from other countries, the use of Balinese script was considered very good. They agreed that the use of Balinese script could be a way of maintaining culture. One respondent from Thailand stated that the use of the Balinese script also had the potential to become a tourist attraction. In detail, respondents stated as follows:

“I agree with the use of Balinese script in the public, like in IGNRIA. This is good for the identity of Balinese community and maintaining your culture”.

The use of the Balinese script was encouraged after the Bali Governor Regulation No. 20 of 2018. Respondents stated that even if there were no governor regulations, using the Balinese script would be a good idea in the framework of culture sustainability.

3) Use of Balinese language

As in the case with the Balinese script, all respondents strongly agreed and supported to the use of Balinese at IGNRIA. The use of this local language was considered as maintaining local genius, preserving the cultural richness of the diverse Indonesian nation. Furthermore they also thought that the use of Balinese at IGNRIA can be a tourist attraction and the source of knowledge to learn. Below is the respondents statements:

“We strongly agree and support the use of Balinese at the airport. Beside sustaining your culture, it can be a nice tourist attraction because local language is a heritage, indeed. Also, it is a knowledge which is worthy to learn”.

Respondents also stated that the use of Balinese language needs to be added, for example if there is already "*Rahajeng memargi*" (goodbye) you can add "*rahajeng rauh*" (welcome). Also other words such as "*alon-alon ring margi*" (be careful on your journey/trip), and "*dumogi selamat ring tetujon*" (hope you arrive safely at your destination).

Having the respondents' attitudes towards the use of Balinese and Balinese script at IGNRIA, it can be concluded that LL here is a smart way in preserving Balinese local genius, especially Balinese script and language. It is really worthy for culture sustainability.

4). Use of Other foreign Language

In regards of the use of other foreign languages (other than English), all respondents agreed to use them in IGNRIA as long as they were in compliance with the laws and was intended to meet the information needs of airport users.

4. CONCLUSION

LL at IGNRIA, Bali makes use of 7 language variations which are written on signages, billboards or information boards. The seven variations are: (1) Indonesian, (2) English, (3) Bilingual Indonesian-English, (4) Bilingual English-Indonesian, (5) Bilingual Balinese and English, (6) Bilingual English-Chinese, and (7) Bilingual Balinese script-English.

Regarding the attitude towards LL at IGNRIA, readers stated the following: 1). The existence of LL is very important, especially to provide information, directions, appeals and warnings. 2). LL principally uses bilingual Indonesian and English because IGNRIA is an international airport with both domestic and international users. 3). The use of Balinese script and Balinese language is very important in order to become a regional identity/identifier preserving Balinese language and script, maintaining culture sustainability and even as a tourist attraction. 5). The use of other foreign languages is welcome as long as it is in accordance with the Law and aims to meet users' needs.

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